

**From:** Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
**To:** Johnson, Aaron  
**Subject:** Draft rule language for the amended Class 3 and 4 water standards  
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Minnesota Pollution Control Agency



## Draft rule language for the amended Class 3 and 4 water standards

Last Friday, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) released the draft rule language for the amended Class 3 and 4 water standards. It can be found [here](#). The proposed rule language and the Statement of Need and Reasonableness (SONAR) are planned for publication in late November, with a notice of intent to adopt the rule with a public hearing. A rule hearing will be held, likely in early 2021. The MPCA expects its rulemaking to be completed in mid-2021.

The new standards are an effort to apply modern science with the goal of providing a more nuanced, localized approach to protecting water quality. In addition, the revised standards will allow for flexibility in creating permits, reduce wastewater permitting delays, and avoid wastewater treatment costs that don't provide environmental benefits.

The MPCA is proposing several changes within each use classification:

- **Class 3.** For Class 3 (industrial use), the MPCA is proposing to consolidate the three subclasses into one standard. In addition, the numeric standards will be removed while the narrative standard will be retained and updated. Finally, the amended standards will provide clarity around implementation of the narrative standards in discharge permits, including a robust implementation approach that is based on specific site conditions and focuses on water hardness.
- **Class 4.** For Class 4A (irrigation), many of the numeric standards will be removed while the narrative standard will be retained and updated. The amended standards will provide clarity around implementation of the narrative standards in discharge permits, including a robust implementation approach that is based on specific site conditions and focuses on water hardness. For Class 4B (livestock and wildlife drinking), the salinity standard is revised based on current science and common water quality indicators. In addition, there are new sulfate and nitrate standards that will protect livestock and wildlife.

The amended standards are the result of years of engagement and input from community partners across the state. MPCA received thousands of comments as the draft rules have been developed.

For additional information regarding proposed changes to Class 3 and 4 water quality standards, please visit the MPCA's [website](#).

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The mission of the MPCA is to protect and improve the environment and human health.

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